



FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

October 27, 2025

Federal Shutdown Impacts

As you may know, the federal government activated a shutdown on October 1 (start of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026). The government will open when the annual appropriation bills pass or a continuing resolution goes into effect.

How does the government shutdown impact the National School Lunch Program?

- Child Nutrition Programs like SNAP are facing funding uncertainty. Missouri will no longer be approving new applications for SNAP benefits in November. More information can be found [**Missouri Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)**](#)
- Schools should continue to download the weekly direct certification match file to identify students previously (prior to November) approved for SNAP and other direct certification benefits such as TANF.
- Many Federal employees are without income and may now qualify for free or reduced-price meals. The Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application must always be available for households to apply at any time! Income changes, furlough and other challenges may occur, and meal benefits help ensure the student has access to a meal.
- October Meal Reimbursements will continue for now because of carryover funds made available to states through USDA that allow us to continue to pay meals. October meal claims are still due on-time by November 17th (since November 15th is a Saturday, claims are due the following Monday). Our office is closely monitoring the carryover funding we currently have access to draw from to cover first quarter of FY 2026 meal claims. If necessary, we may have to alter the timing of reimbursements if funding is not sufficient. Reimbursements for meal claims are always subject to be temporarily delayed due to the shutdown.
- Food service programs including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, USDA Foods, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable are expected to continue operating during this short-term shutdown. The future impact depends largely on how long the shutdown last.
- If shutdown last longer than October, reimbursements are more likely to be delayed. Our office will provide guidance to support school food service program questions and provide the most-up-to date information on the shutdown and impact on reimbursement.
- Reminder, schools should encourage families impacted by the shutdown to complete a meal application to apply for free or reduced-price meals.

October is Missouri Farm to School Month



Bite into Missouri local products any day in October!

The Missouri Crunch Off is organized by the Missouri Farm to School Team to celebrate National Farm to School Month. The **Missouri Crunch website** has excellent resources to help plan a fun and engaging event.

In case you missed the Missouri Crunch Off Podcast- **you can watch it here!**

Happy Farm to School Month

This month is all about celebrating and supporting the hard working Missouri producers, growers and farmers by purchasing local food that spans the school meal trays; increasing students access to fresh unprocessed locally grown and raised food, while learning healthy eating habits and where food comes from. Missouri Governor has proclaimed October as Farm to School Month.

To help promote local, Missouri DESE Farm to School Program was able to provide **Missouri Grown** apples to 300+ schools. You can view the release here **Missouri and Gold Star Foods Partner on “Crunch Off” to Promote Healthy Eating Habits and Support for Local Farms.**

If you received these apples, you must register your Crunch! Thank you for participating in the 2025 Crunch-off.

Register your Crunch

Let Missouri know you're joining the movement! Register your Crunch-off event using the link below so we can celebrate and count your participation toward the statewide total.

Missouri Crunch Off Registration

Apple Crunch Micro Site: access posters, flyers, and much more through the site to download marketing materials to promote your crunch event.

Micro Site link: <https://applecrunchmissouri.com/>

Don't forget to tag us and use our hashtags when you Crunch!

We want to see those apples in action — share your photos, videos, and Crunch moments with us on social media! @MOFarmToSchool @GoldStarFoods #MissouriAppleCrunchOff

We would love to include your success story in our next newsletter- **share your pictures**, email Madelyn.terry@dese.mo.gov.

Schools are encouraged to crunch any locally grown or raised items to make the crunch count!

Farm to School Success Story

SHOUT OUT TO BLAIR OAKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Blair Oaks R-II Food Service Director, Amanda Boessen, procured 80 pounds of locally grown fresh green and yellow beans from Ashland, MO. What do you do with 80 pounds of green beans?? You have a bean snapping party, a "spur-of-the-moment adventure" stated

Amanda. Their lunch then included the opportunity for elementary students to **CRUNCH** into the flavor and journey of the green beans at their cafeteria tables.



Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant

Review our **Let's Talk Tuesday Webinar on LFS** for information and how to apply for available funding to purchase local food.

Your school can apply for Local Food for Schools (LFS) funds to purchase additional apples by visiting the LFS website. Simply [click here](#) or scan the QR code to get going!

Here's to a crunchy, healthy, and local celebration!
Let's Keep Growing Forward Together!

Barbara Shaw

Barbara Shaw, Coordinator
Food and Nutrition Services + The Growing Forward Team



Special Shout Out!

Concordia Elementary School's cafeteria staff:

Bristol Dillon & Mackenzie Brown

"They both are new to their positions, but have come in and radically improved the kitchen itself, as well as ramped up the food offerings. Kids are excited to eat our school lunch



program. Bristol and Mackenzie are fixing meal items more from scratch and have tried to eliminate the processed, pre-packaged items. They both do their job with a smile and many kind words to staff and students. We are so proud to have them at Concordia Elementary School! They are difference makers without even realizing it!"

-Tim M. Thompson, M.Ed., Ed.S., Principal
Concordia Elementary School



FNS Resources and Updates

Quick Links on the DESE Food and Nutrition Services Website

Here are a few quick links to help you transition into the new school year!

- **Food and Nutrition Services Homepage**
- **Yearly Calendar**
- **Meal Counts and Claims**
- **Food Allergy Information**
- **Newsletters**

Fall 2025 Let's Talk Trainings

You can find our past Let's Talk webinars on our **Trainings page**. If they are not available yet, they will be posted soon.

- Verification - October 10th
- Nonprogram Food Revenue Tool and Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Tool - October 17th
- Miscellaneous Requirements - October 24th

Save the Date for upcoming webinars:

- Point of Service - Friday, November 14th
- Avoiding Fiscal Action - Friday, December 5th

FY 2025 Equipment Assistance Grant Update

The FY 2025 Equipment Grant allocations and information have not been announced yet. Once it is announced and our application is approved by USDA, the application will remain open for a minimum of 3 weeks and we will also send out an email, post on the web and in an upcoming newsletter when it is available.

Severe Need Reimbursement Rate Breakdown

The purpose of this guidance is to help clarify how to determine eligibility for severe need (SVN) reimbursements for breakfast served through the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and for the two-cent differential reimbursement for lunches served through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Schools are eligible for the breakfast SVN reimbursement rate if 40 percent or more of NSLP lunches served to students at school during the second preceding school year were at the free or reduced price rate.

Schools are then eligible for the two cent differential reimbursement for lunches if 60 percent or more of the NSLP lunches served in the second preceding school year were at the free or reduced rate. This two cent differential for NSLP is determined at the School Food Authority (SFA)-level.

SVN rate is based on school-level data. CEP schools use the same two year prior data and eligibility is based on the school's individual identified student percentage (ISP). If the school operated CEP during the second preceding school year, the individual school's approved ISP determines eligibility for SVN reimbursements. Therefore, the individual school's ISP from the second preceding year multiplied by the 1.6 factor, must be at least 40 percent to qualify for the higher reimbursement in the SBP.

SVN rate reimbursement is provided to schools which have demonstrated that a high percentage of meals, defined as 40 percent or more of lunches, are being served to needy students.

The **25-26 SY Reimbursement Rates** are found on the DESE Food & Nutrition website under Quick Links.

Reimbursement Rates				
Effective July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026				
National School Lunch Program				
	Less than 60%	60% or More	Less than 60% + 9 Cents	60% or More + 9 Cents
Paid	\$.44	\$.46	\$.53	\$.55
Reduced Price	\$4.20	\$4.22	\$4.29	\$4.31
Free	\$4.60	\$4.62	\$4.69	\$4.71
School Breakfast Program				
	Non-Severe Need		Severe Need	
Paid	\$.40		\$.40	
Reduced Price	\$2.16		\$2.64	
Free	\$2.46		\$2.94	

Important School Nutrition Requirements & Reminders

SP18-2025 Guidance on Fees for Electronic Payments in School Meal Programs

This memorandum provides revised guidance for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the school meal programs regarding fees charged when families use electronic payment services to add money to school meal accounts. It also reminds SFAs that they must offer a free and accessible method for all families to add money to school meal accounts. This refreshed guidance reduces administrative burden and clarifies statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements.

This memorandum rescinds, effective immediately, SP 04-2025 *Fees for Electronic Payment Services in the School Meal Programs*, issued on Nov. 1, 2024, and supersedes SP 02-2015: *Online Fees in the School Meal Programs*, issued on Oct. 8, 2014. The best practice is to eliminate or reduce fees, but is no longer required.

Administrative Reviews

The Administrative Review list is now posted on the DESE FNS website – **Administrative State Agency Reviews**. In addition to a comprehensive list of schools to be reviewed in the upcoming school year, we have also provided a list of schools that will be receiving a review via CN Resource. If you are on the **2025-2026 Schedule of Administrative Reviews**, you will be receiving an AR in the upcoming school year. If you are also listed on the Reviews to be Conducted by CN Resource, this means that you will be receiving a review from CN Resource, rather than DESE Food and Nutrition Services. Those that are on the **CN Resource list**, please be on the lookout for correspondence from CN Resource as they will be the ones to reach out in regards to your upcoming review.

Visit our **Procurement page** for information on Procurement resources and Procurement reviews.

Free and Reduced Policy Statement Collection

Beginning November 2025, DESE Food and Nutrition Services will be collecting updated Policy Statements and Permanent Application Agreements.

As part of this process, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will need to submit the following documents:

- Direct Certification Notice (Attachment C)
- Application Form (Attachment E)
- Proposed Letter or Notice to Parents (Attachment B)

Webinar will be coming soon.

Technical Assistance (TA) Visits

New Monitoring Process - Child Nutrition Program Integrity Rule

- SY 25-26 - TA visits to be conducted for schools identified as high risk during 24-25 Administrative Review (AR)
 - 10% + Certification and Benefit Issuance Errors
 - Verification Not Completed
 - Meal Counting Errors - Recalculation
 - Claiming Errors - Systemic
 - Missing Meal Components
 - Missing Production Records
 - Unallowable Costs

Food Service Management Renewals

Food Service Management Company (FSMC) Request for Proposals (RFPs) have been updated. You must use our template to ensure all the regulatory information is included in the contract. There is a list of LEA's that are at the end of their 5 year cycle and the meal equivalent factor for the 25-26 school year is on our website at **Food Service Management | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**. If you are in the last year of your 5 year cycle or wish to go out for bid for a FSMC, please contact **Kyle Heislen**.

Missouri HealthNet Form - Attachment M

The number of families indicating the absence of healthcare insurance and the number of forms provided to the family is to be reported to our FNS office on the MO HEALTHNET FOR KIDS DATA COLLECTION form (Attachment M) and is due **November 30th**. The Attachment M form can be found on our website along with all other **Free and Reduced Price Information and Attachments**. If information is updated after the initial due date, **submit a revised form**. If you have already submitted a form for this SY and do not need to send a revision, **it has been received**.

Verification Information

Provided is a link to the [Verification information and procedures](#) for the 2025-2026 school year. **Verification must be complete by November 17th. Since the 15th falls on a Saturday the following business day, Monday the 17th can be used.** As a reminder, the verification report is due [December 15th](#).

Additional Verification Resources:

- [Verification Step-by-step Summary](#)
- [USDA Verification Toolkit](#)
- Verification Procedures - Let's Talk Webinar October 2025
 - [Recording](#)
 - [Presentation Slides](#)

Updates to School Nutrition Standards

The **updates** to school nutrition standards will provide children with less sugars and sodium, which are too high in the American diet, and continue to provide nutritious foods including fruits, veggies, and whole grains. [Learn more](#).

2025-2026 Prospective Waiver

Using authority under Section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 U.S.C 1760(l), MO DESE was approved for a **SY25-26 prospective waiver** to allow local program operators to quickly respond to unanticipated building closures by providing flexibilities for non-congregate meal service, meal service times, parent/guardian pick up, offer versus serve (NSLP only), meal service at school sites (SSO). With these waivers in place, DESE may approve program operators to serve non-congregate meals for up to 10 consecutive operating days without prior notice to FNS. Oftentimes, operators experience a short-term disaster/emergency. Examples are flooding, broken pipes, gas leaks, blizzards, school lockdowns for various reasons, building closures, loss of electricity resulting in building closure. All these situations happen very quickly. Without the Prospective waiver you run the risk of not being able to get waiver approval in time to provide the operator the ability to serve and claim meals and they may miss out on reimbursement.

Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) Guidance and Tool- Under the 2025 Appropriations Act, for SY 2025-2026, only LEAs that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account as of June 30, 2024, shall be required to establish a price for paid lunches according to the PLE provisions. Schools may use the [PLE exemption survey](#) and the [PLE tool for school year 2025-2026](#).

Excess Balance

The Food Service Account is a “non-profit” account or fund, this means that the account is allowed to carry a three month average operating cost.

Example of calculating an excess balance:

- We calculate an excess balance by taking the closing balance (i.e. \$411,211.15) and subtracting the three month balance (i.e. \$225,968.28). This gives you the excess balance that you need to “spend down”. If the LEA receives an Excess Balance Letter- the LEA must respond with a written (on district letter head) plan on how the excess funds will be spent.
 - To bring the balance in line with program requirements, we suggest immediate consideration of one or more of the following: (1) improve the quality of food offered; (2) purchase needed movable equipment items and supplies; (3) pay expenses for food service personnel to attend workshops, conferences, or trainings; and (4) to achieve compliance with the Healthy Hunger Kids Free Act you may not arbitrarily divert funds accumulated in your food service operation; however, you may consider indirect cost recovery. (5) Paid Lunch Equity Exemption

If your LEA has an excess balance, the Authoritative Representative should receive a notification letter from Heidi Garlin. The LEA will need to submit the written response/plan for reducing the program balance and the estimated date of completion. After the excess balance is depleted, the LEA must submit detailed documentation explaining steps used to reduce expenditure with the amounts expended and all receipts if applicable.

If spend down plans include Capital Expenditures (per 2 CFR 200.1), a Capital Expenditure Request must also be submitted and approved. **Note: The equipment threshold for the State of Missouri increased to \$5,000.**

Food Safety Inspections Report

The report is available within your SNP Application and was due on **September 15**. This report **must** be completed prior to submitting the first claim. See the image below for instructions on how to access the report. For additional due dates please review the **Food and Nutrition Services Calendar**.

USDA Foods Update

Funds Received to Help with Delivery Fees

Due to changes beyond our control, there will be a delivery fee for all school districts that receive donated foods. All school districts will be responsible for a small delivery fee to receive direct delivery and Fee for Service (FFS) items. Beginning on October 1, 2025, public schools will be billed a **\$2.25** per case delivery fee by Gold Star Foods for Direct Delivery and Fee For Service items. Starting August 1, 2025, private schools will be billed **\$5.25** per case delivery fee by Gold Star Foods for Direct Delivery and Fee For Service items.

However, we received additional funding to help pay for most of these delivery fees. **All public-school and non-public districts' Gold Star Foods accounts will be credited for the estimated delivery fees.** This credit was calculated according to total Direct Delivery (DD) and Fee For Service (FFS) cases requested in the 2025-2026 USDA Food Packet for the period of October 1, 2025, through April 30, 2026. However, the delivery fee will remain in effect and your monthly invoice from Gold Star Foods will reflect the delivery charges as notified earlier in August. The additional allocated funds will be applied toward the DD and FFS delivery charge. Please check the Gold Star System (Invoice/Credit History) before sending payment for the delivery fees.

This credit does not take into consideration the Advertisement (Bonus) cases you have ordered. When the credit on your account has been exhausted, your district will be



Let's Talk Tuesday - USDA Foods Essentials for the New School Year

Thank you to everyone who was able to join the live webinar on September 23. In case you missed it, or if you would like to review the information, the recorded *Let's Talk Tuesday -- USDA Foods Essentials for the New School Year* webinar is now available on our **Trainings** page under the USDA Foods section.

USDA Foods Expo Preview at MSNA

At the Missouri School Nutrition Association Annual Conference (MSNA), there will be a USDA Foods Expo Preview. We'll have a brochure that will list the USDA Foods processors in Missouri and will provide some information about USDA Foods. In addition, the USDA Foods processors will be identified with balloons in the food show. Although the 2026-27 packet won't be available, yet, we encourage you to talk with the processors about what USDA Foods products will be available for the coming year.



Cancellations, Delays and Substitutions

While most of our direct delivery foods are being delivered as scheduled, we have some products that have been delayed or cancelled. If there are direct delivery items you requested on your packet, but have not received as scheduled, please consult the **Canceled/Delayed USDA Foods Direct Delivery Orders** page. If the item is not listed as cancelled or delayed, please reach out to our USDA Foods team at donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov.

- **100348 Frozen Corn, 100225 Diced Pears, and 100206 Apple Slices**
 - Delayed trucks arrived at Gold Star in mid-October, and product is now available for delivery.
- **100125 Turkey Roasts**
 - One truck of turkey roasts has been canceled. We did receive an August truck, which will cover the majority of orders, but some districts will be shorted or will

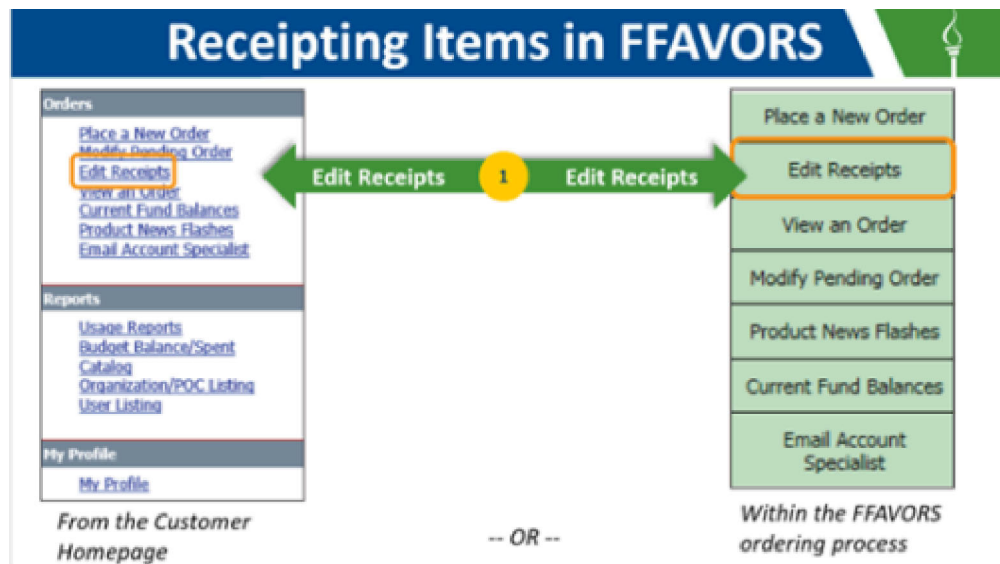
not receive Turkey Roasts.

- **100362 Refried Beans**
 - The truck for August distribution is now delayed until the end of October. However, we did receive one truck in August that met some of our demand.
- **100256 Strawberry Cups**
 - Four trucks that were scheduled to arrive at Gold Star in January and February have been cancelled. This means that cases that were on the packet for February through April delivery will not be fulfilled.
- **100158 Ground Beef**
 - Delayed trucks arrived at Gold Star and are now available to order.
- **100309 Carrots, Sliced, Canned**
 - The truck of sliced carrots for November distribution was canceled. We have a truck arriving in mid-November that will cover some of these orders.
- **100134 Beef Crumbles**
 - The truck for October distribution didn't arrive until 10/2
- **111882 Turkey Breast, Smoked Sliced**
 - The truck for November distribution is now expected to arrive at Gold Star in mid-January, making cases available for January or February delivery.
- **111900 Turkey Breast, Sliced**
 - The truck for November distribution was canceled. We will substitute these allocations with 111882 Smoked Sliced Turkey Breast, which is expected to be delivered in January, making cases available for January or February delivery.

DoD Fresh Reminder

Please make sure to receipt your DoD items in FFAVORS within **2 business days** of delivery.

Receiving Items in FFAVORS



Receipts
Count: 3

Receipts are 'Past Due' if not receipted within 7 calendar days of RDD

	CUSTOMER CODE	CUSTOMER NAME	RDD	CALENDAR DAYS PAST RDD	RECEIPT DT	RECEIPTED BY
Edit	YFLC36	HAMILTON ELEMENTARY	2/4/2016	12 Past Due		
Edit	YFLC36	HAMILTON ELEMENTARY	2/9/2016	7		
Edit	YFLC36	HAMILTON ELEMENTARY	2/10/2016	6		

3 Enter the cases received

Item Code	Description	Case Contents	Case Price	Case Qty	Case Receipt Qty	Receipt Cost	Fund	Reason for Receipt Qty Difference
14144	APPLE CHL SL 200/2 OZ PG	25 LB	\$4.30	30	28	\$129.00	Federal	TOO GREEN/OVER-RIPE
14153	ORANGE 1/2 LB BG	2 LB	\$4.79	10	12	\$47.90	Federal	ACCEPTED OVERDELIVER
14M14	STRAWBERRY 1/1 PT CO	1 LB	\$2.15	10	10	\$21.50	Federal	N/A

4 Enter a reason if you didn't receive all ordered cases

Fund Balance for NSLP

	State \$	Federal \$
Starting Balance	\$0.00	\$800.00
Spent, Previous Orders	\$0.00	\$208.51
Cost, This Order	\$0.00	\$198.40
Remaining Balance	\$0.00	\$401.09

5 Process Pending Receipt

PROCESS Pending Receipt

Go Back to the List of Receipts

Bonus DoD Funds

Bonus DoD dollars are very limited this year. If you would like to request Bonus DOD entitlement, please use the [DoD Funds Request Form](#) with the amount you would like to request. If and when we find that we have bonus DoD, we will fairly distribute the money to LEAs who have completed the request.

Save the Date!

For our commodity expos, we are going to partner with the Heart of America and SFNDA Food shows again this year. The Heart of America show is February 4th at the Kansas City Expo Center, and the SFNDA show will be February 17th at the Ameristar Casino in St. Charles. There will be a reception the evening before each of these events. Registration will be available in November.



SAVE THE DATE



HOA Commodity Expo — and — Vendor Showcase

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4
KC EXPO CENTER
11730 N AMBASSADOR DR.
KANSAS CITY, MO



SFNDA Commodity Expo — and — Vendor Showcase

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17
AMERISTAR
1 AMERISTAR BLVD.
ST. CHARLES, MO

RECEPTION THE EVENING BEFORE

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!



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